

Charles Manson: The Making of a Monster

It's possible that, in the best of circumstances, Charles Manson would have turned out to be an evil, demented cult leader and mass murderer. And it's also possible he suffered from lifelong psychiatric issues that clouded his thinking and moral judgment. Only God knows. But what is clear is that his upbringing and early life experiences were a formula for disaster.

A 2013 article in the *Daily Mail* notes that, "According to his cousin, JoAnn, whose parents raised Manson in their home in McMechen, West Virginia, for several years, 'There was never anything happy about him. He never did anything good.'" Yes, the cousin reports, "The boy was obsessed with knives and guns and when he lost control of his anger, his eyes blazed with an intensity that convinced her he was capable of injuring or even killing her." The article also claims that Manson's mother feared her "crazy-eyed" son when he was just 5 years old.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Manson's mother was married and gave birth to him when she was just 15 years old, her husband and Manson's father being five years older. But he quickly abandoned the family, leaving Manson fatherless. As for the mother, she was arrested on armed robbery charges when Manson was only 4 years old, sentenced to five years in prison. What a horrific start to life.

The *Mail* notes that, "it is equally clear that when offered any choice as to which path to take Manson invariably opted for the wrong one." In other words, regardless of his upbringing, he made wrong choices. And as I stated at the

beginning of this article, that could well be the case. But you have to stop and wonder for a moment what would have happened if Manson had been raised in a solid, stable, loving, godly environment. Again, only God knows.

Then there is element to factor in: "As [an] undersized boy he was a target for sexual abuse and beatings from older boys.

"He found his best defense was to convince them he was crazy. He did just that with screeches, facial tics, flapping arms and twitches."

Not surprisingly, he started having serious brushes with the law while still a young teen, and by the time he was 32 years old, he had spent more than half of his life incarcerated (17 out of 32 years).

And in an odd repeat of his parents' actions, at the age of 20, he married a 15-year-old girl, ending up back in prison after she had their child. Such is the cycle of sin and destruction.

How much was Manson conscious of the lacks he experienced growing up?

In a chilling interview posted on *The Sun*, he explained that he felt no guilt over the crimes he had committed, only wondering if he should have killed "four or five hundred people. Then," he said, "I would have felt better. Then I would have felt like I really would have offered society something."

But he also said this, "My awareness and my consciousness [are] not the same as someone who goes to school and has a mom and dad. Not having parents has left me in another dimension, so to say, you know."

In the end, he was responsible for his actions, and no one forced him to do evil. He is accountable to society and to God

for his crimes, which are without excuse and cannot be minimized.

At the same time, knowing the effects of broken homes on children—especially fatherless homes and their direct link to crime—one can only wonder how much an upbringing without father and without mother, coupled with physical and sexual abuse from peers, helped make Manson into the monster that he was.

And while it's too late to redeem his life, let us do our best to reach out to those whose upbringing and environment were far from ideal while also seeking to build stable, loving homes that will give our kids the best chance in life. And even for those who serve out life-sentences in prison, there are some, like David Berkovitz, who go from being the "Son of Sam" to the "Son of Hope."

While there's breath, there's still a chance.